

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

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DRAFTED BY EA/TIMBS:HEMEINHEIT:TROBINSON:CCH
APPROVED BY P MR. NEWSOM
EA/TIMBS - MR. FRITTS
E - MR. COOPER

-----081661 130407Z /15

R 121633Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204771

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, SREF, TH

SUBJECT: NEW THAI AMBASSADOR CALLS ON DEPT PRINCIPALS

1. ON AUGUST 7, NEWLY ARRIVED THAI AMBASSADOR KLOT
WISETSURAKAN PAID COURTESY CALLS ON UNDER SECRETARIES
COOPER AND NEWSOM. THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE TOUCHED ON
DURING THE CALLS.

2. ASEAN MINISTERIAL: AMB KLOT TOLD MR. COOPER AND
MR. NEWSOM THAT THE THAI DELEGATION TO THE AUG 3-4 ASEAN
MINISTERIAL WAS "VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED". THE HIGH
LEVEL OF U.S. PARTICIPATION AND INTEREST WAS AN ENCOURAG-
ING SIGN OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR ASEAN AND THE REGION. AMB
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KLOT ALSO SAID THAT ASEAN WAS PLEASED TO SEE THE NEW FORTH-
COMING USG POSITION ON THE COMMON FUND AS EXPRESSED BY
SECRETARY VANCE DURING THE MINISTERIAL. MR. COOPER NOTED
THAT IN FACT THE USG APPROACH TO THE COMMON FUND HAS BEEN
BASICALLY THE SAME ALL ALONG AND THAT NOW IS THE TIME FOR
COMPROMISE BY ALL PARTIES TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A MUTUALLY
ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION.

3. INDOCHINA: AMB KLOT NOTED THAT THAILAND WAS IN THE FOREFRONT OF ASEAN BECAUSE OF ITS GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY TO INDOCHINA. THAILAND WAS DOING AS MUCH AS IT COULD TO

STABILIZE THE SITUATION BUT HAD TO REMAIN ON GUARD. HE COMMENTED THAT TALES OF ATROCITIES WHICH THE REFUGEES CARRIED INTO NORTHEASTERN THAILAND HAD HAD AN INDIRECT BENEFIT ON THAI POLITICAL STABILITY BY DISCREDITING THAI LEFTIST POLITICAL GROUPINGS. THE 1976 ELECTION DEMONSTRATED THE LOSS OF APPEAL OF THE LEFT IN THE NORTHEAST, ACCORDING TO KLOT.

4. REFUGEES: MR. NEWSOM SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH FORMIN UPPADIT AND OTHER ASEAN DELEGATION LEADERS THE POSSIBILITY OF ASEAN AND THE UNHCR TAKING THE LEAD IN ORGANIZING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROBLEM. THE REACTION HAD BEEN MIXED. KLOT RESPONDED THAT THAILAND WOULD BE HESITANT TO CREATE A FORUM WHERE REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN GENERAL COULD BE RAISED THEREBY DETRACTING FROM EMPHASIS ON THE INDOCHINESE PROBLEM. HE RAISED THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND THE BURMESE REFUGEE PROBLEMS ON THAILAND'S OWN WESTERN BORDER AS EXAMPLES OF ISSUES THAT MIGHT INTRUDE INTO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THE AMB WENT ON TO REMARK THAT THAILAND WAS NOT PREPARED TO OFFER A PERMANENT REFUGEE

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RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM. THIS WOULD CREATE A PERMANENT REFUGEE PROBLEM FOR THAILAND. IN RESPONSE TO MR. NEWSOM'S COMMENT THAT MOST OF THE REFUGEES WERE ETHNICALLY CLOSE TO THE THAI PEOPLE, THE AMB RAISED THE CONTINUING PROBLEM OF THE OLD VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THE NORTHEAST. HE ALSO NOTED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WERE TAKING THE "CREAM OF THE CROP" WHILE THE UNSKILLED REFUGEES REMAINED IN THAILAND.

5. CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS: IN THE COURSE OF A DISCUSSION OF CONGRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY, MR. NEWSOM EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON MEETING AND GETTING TO KNOW KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. CHRISTOPHER

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